

Tape 1 Side A

This is an oral interview at the Intermountain Research Station, 1221 South Main, Moscow, Idaho. Present are Chuck Wellner, Andy Lawrence. Interview project is Living in the Priest River Experimental Forest. Purpose, purpose of this oral history interview is to provide a human dimension to descriptions of the facility. The goal is to capture this human dimension through interviews with _____ that used the facility. The time is now 9:30. It's January 12, 1994. And the interviewer is Cord Simms.

SIMMS: Start out with some general biographical information as far as your, Chuck, your date of birth and location.

WELLNER: I was born January 3, 1911, in Enid, Oklahoma.

SIMMS: In...what was the name of it?

WELLNER: Enid. E-n-i-d. My parents had grown up in Wisconsin. My dad had, I forgot what the name of his disease was, anyway, it was a breathing disease and so he was told to go to Oklahoma, that he would do better down there. He was, he did mostly farm work. And my mother, too, was from that part of the country up in... well, anyway...

SIMMS: Mmm. Did you, you went to school in Oklahoma? Grade school and high school?

WELLNER: No, we left there when I was about six months old. I came to Idaho.

SIMMS: Oh, you did? You're practically a native.

WELLNER: Practically, yeah. Located near Hanson, Idaho.

SIMMS: Where abouts is Hanson?

WELLNER: It's near Twin Falls. Just a little bit east of Twin Falls. All my early schooling was, well, we moved to Twin Falls and that's where my schooling was. I guess I started, I guess I went through the third grade in Hanson and then moved to Twin Falls and my schooling then was, our school _____. Then in 1929 I went to the University of Idaho.

SIMMS: Did you have in mind that you were going to go into Forestry? At that time? When you went to school.

WELLNER: Yeah...yeah.

SIMMS: How did, there's a lot of desert around Twin Falls.

WELLNER: I suppose the reason was that as a kid, as a boy, why, I had been a Boy Scout and was brought up into the mountains south of Twin Falls.

SIMMS: Mmm.

WELLNER: Anyway, forestry seemed like a good deal. Only I, when I went to the University of Idaho I started taking forest engineering and took that for two years. As a result, got more engineering courses than most forestry school students do. Then decided that I wasn't going to be a sort of a bastard career. You weren't a full-fledged engineer and you weren't a forester either. So I switched to forestry, well, I was already in forestry, but I switched to just general forestry. My sophomore year I started working for Dr. Huber. He was the pathologist there and I worked for them for three years while I was going to school.

SIMMS: So what year did you graduate from U of I?

WELLNER: 1933.

SIMMS: OK. I, wasn't there a photo in your book that you were up there at the Priest River Experimental Forest in '32, or?

WELLNER: '32. Yeah.

SIMMS: Did you, did you work a summer there or something like that?

WELLNER: Yeah, I worked up there, well, what happened was that all the juniors at the University of Idaho used to go up to Priest River Station for about two or three weeks in the spring. And _____ spring and they needed a field assistant so I was working under _____. And I started working for _____ originally and that was just a fill-in job and then, then I started working on silviculture after I, that was about in June, I guess.

SIMMS: Did you get a job with the Forest Service, a permanent job with the Forest Service after you graduated?

WELLNER: Well, yeah. But I graduated 1933 and they didn't give the exam that...

SIMMS: ...it was kind of a hard year probably.

WELLNER: Yeah, it, it was a bad year. Roosevelt had come in, but the Forest Service budget was cut terribly that spring. I started with, at the Station, worked until July 1st, and Lyle Watts was Director of the Station at that time, and he, he had to lay us all off. There were, oh, there were, all the temporary people at the Station and so we, he got us jobs up in, in Glacier Park. And we went up there for the summer. In the fall, why, we came back about, oh, it was about October 1st, I guess. Finished up in Glacier and the Station rehired us. By that time some of

the money that had come, was filtering down.

SIMMS: This was still in '33?

WELLNER: '33, yeah. And so the Station offered us jobs. And things were beginning to boom then. I worked for the Station in Missoula come winter and went back to Priest River the next year, back in '34. Worked at Priest River in charge of the field crew up there for that summer. I'd gotten, I'd taken the exam, the civil service exam in the fall of '33 and got my appointment then. But it was, it was still a temporary, just for the, one of these appointments that they made because there was a lot of extra money they didn't have any, I wasn't on the permanent staff for some time. But this continued, this extra money that.. and I worked at Priest River on silviculture work. Had a crew of young folks working with me. Then I'd go back to Missoula in the fall of each year. And that went on for, well up until World War II. And we, we began to get a lot of enrollees from the, from the CCC during the '30's and we had a camp at Priest River. And then in Missoula, the boys go back to Missoula in the wintertime. Well that went along until World War II. And then the CCC phased out and I went in the Navy at that time. Came back from the Navy in 1946. And, by that time, the silviculture position had been filled by a fellow from the Lake States and Ken Davis, who had been at the Station in charge of silviculture had gone to the University of Montana, guess he ended up in the University of Montana. When I came back from the Navy he wanted me to, to work for him at the University of Montana, but I wasn't about to do that, so I went back to the station, worked at Priest River

again, until 1940 (1948).

SIMMS: And that was in silviculture work again?

WELLNER: I was in silviculture again, and did work at Priest River, had crews for several summers up there. Then in 1968, decided to, the eastern stations had been cutting the _____

_____ and Lyle Watts got somebody for our station and he set up a, a research center in Spokane, Washington. And I was in charge of it. Continued silviculture research. We had some range research and products research and several different fields like that in Spokane. But I still had responsibility for the Priest River Experimental Forest. Up until 19_____, until I went over there, why, Gisburnich sort of looked after Priest River Experimental Forest, until I took it over in 1968. Then in charge of administrations and that was 1953, '53 or, yeah, '53 was the _____...

SIMMS: Eisenhower...

WELLNER: Well, I was trying to think, our director, Lyle Watts retired at that point, that was the usual system because they were changing, changing parties and so he retired and _____...

SIMMS: _____ complicated...

WELLNER: _____. Well, I suppose you want more on Priest River than anything else.

SIMMS: Well, no, that, you're, you're right on.

WELLNER: I'll give you, I'll just briefly tell the rest of my history...

SIMMS: Yeah, yeah that would be good.

WELLNER: I continued at Priest River until 19, 1958. And then

became assistant director, Intermountain Station in Ogden. Went to Ogden and was there until, oh, moved my family to Ogden, too. I was there until 19, let's see, that was '68, '58 to '68 _____ and went to Spokane. They set up, didn't go to Spokane, I came here, because the Station had been moved in '61 from Spokane to here.

SIMMS: Is that when this building was built? Or is this later?

? : It's _____ in '62, somewhere in there I think.

WELLNER: I guess _____ '63, the building,

? : '63, this one was completed, but you, there was a location, there was the other small administrative structure out there.

WELLNER: But I moved into this building in '63. And changed the, doesn't sound right, '63, no, I was, I was still down in Ogden then, _____, until '68. Then the station had a, it changed their organization and they placed me up here in charge of the whole, all, all of the projects here in the Station. I, I had been interested in trying to develop worker _____ conscience. We got stymied several times in the early '60's by the Washington Office because they had set up _____ big units down there and they lost control of the, of the budget, in the south and in the east they would go into Washington and these research center leaders and get special appropriations until the, the fellow in charge of research in the Forest Service had just lost control of his budget. And so he cut back in 19, I think it was about 1963, along in there, that

he'd cut, but back and got rid of all these folks out in the field who were.... _____. Let's see, they had lost control of the budget, so he, he cut money back to, to just a few assistant directors. He made each, each location responsible, he cut out all of the overhead at locations and we were responsible for the projects at each location. I was very much concerned because we were just beginning to get to work at cross projects and, and we had worked out some techniques to cross, where we would get groups of scientists working together. That didn't, and he cut back to the individual projects, like your housing, disciplinary projects. I just felt this was wrong and that was 1961, 1963, I guess. I remember an inspection, Jemison was in charge of research at the time and he come out for inspection on, and we had, or in the Station, had decided that we should organize by pretty much by ecosystems and set up a whole organization on the basis of ecosystems. And we had a pretty good plan worked up.

SIMMS: This was in 1963? Or in the '60's?

WELLNER: I think it was even before that. 1961.

SIMMS: Oh, I'll be darned.

WELLNER: Anyway, it was about that time, '61 or '62. And he came out on an inspection and we were all worried, all set to tell him about our plans for reorganization of the whole Intermountain Station, _____ Northern Rocky Mountain Station and Intermountain Station, and he says, well, I don't care to listen to it. I'll just tell you folks how we are going to reorganize. And so all of our plans, and the Director was

_____ Bailey at the time, and, went down the drain.

_____ drove him mad.

We were right back to projects again. And they got rid of all of these super project leaders and each one of us had, I had thirteen projects at the time, and was damn busy, because we had no, we had, the project leader was a scientist who was unlike the folks had _____ before, mostly from administration and those folks are just, caused a lot of grief as far as the merger was concerned. So we were, the project leaders understood that we'd have small projects, that the project leader would rotate. Well, this went along until 1968 and we had another reorganization and so that's _____. Came up to Moscow in '71. And

_____. That's when I was trying to bring together again the, all of the projects, and I had a job, too, as supervisor of the, of the projects here in Moscow, all of them. I stayed on that job until _____, that's '73, I guess. When I retired.

SIMMS: So this ecosystem management thing is not all that new?

WELLNER: Oh, no. Hell's Bells _____.

? : We've talked about it a long time, huh?

WELLNER: We've talked ecosystem management a long time ago. And we were to some extent _____, too.

Mine was very close to National Forest systems. In all my career, I worked, I felt that research, the primary job of research was to tackle the problems of National Forest systems. That's each year we had a review, and that's the way we went. There were always a few scientists who had made, made a name for

themselves, _____ just given complete responsibility to do research on their own. But there weren't very many of those nationwide. And we didn't have any at the Moscow Station at all.

Well, I finally retired in '73. We, we finally got a grant from the Washington office which I worked on before to bring the projects together. It was, it came as a half to the University and a half to us. And when I retired I worked on that for the University, to bring this together. And we, we did some work here. Ron Stage was here at the time. Anyway, we, we got that together. Well, when I retired I spent a year with the University, after I retired carrying on this multiple thing of several projects, working together on them. It was a joint thing between the University and the Station. And then next year I decided that, it wasn't good for me to do, the folks in the Forest Service and the University themselves had to do it. And so I didn't keep that job.

I started research natural areas. There's a whole history, when you research natural areas, too, that I had worked on some in the late '30's. Washington Office would come to the Station periodically and say, it's time to get another research natural area. You folks have to work on this and the Washington... there's people in the Washington Office pushing it... and so the Director appointed me in the late '30's to look at the National Forests of Region One and pick several natural areas, which I did. But he left the Station and we were sort of, what's called, Wycoff became, not Wycoff, but Bradner became Director, Acting Director I guess that was, and when he came to actually write up

these research of natural areas and get them through to the Washington Office, everything went fine until he got to the, what the Hell's his name, the Regional Forester, and he refused to sign any of these. He said that they didn't have to go to Washington, so all we got approved were those on Experimental Forests. They got caught up in the national system, but they, they never were approved by the Washington office, even though we got them listed in the Washington office. Well, it kept, we lost all of them, except, let's see, three on the Experimental Forest which the, the Regional Forester didn't have anything to say about the Region, so we kept those and they got caught up in the system. And I was away during the war. Tried after the war...

SIMMS: That must have been Major Kelly.

WELLNER: Major Kelly. Yeah. Major Kelly was the one.

SIMMS: The Regional Forester.

WELLNER: He was a good Regional Forester. He was brought to Region One to, because of the fire problem, for a special reason. But he, he couldn't see _____ much a point in research natural areas. Well, he retired before the end of the war. Anyway, things kept drifting along and I, I tried to get one on the St. Joe and had trouble with it, a natural area, and so things just drifted.

About 1960 I began to work at it harder and organized a natural area committee in Region Four. And then a committee in Region One. In the '50's, and it came along, but, we weren't able to do much because it was just an add-on job and I had thirteen projects as it was. I spent about two weeks in the summertime on

natural areas and then in the early '70's I could see this wasn't going to work at all. And, yet, it was getting late, much of the land was being cut over, unless we got natural areas pretty soon, why, we weren't going to get them. So I set up a committee and, Idaho Research Natural Area Committee, 1973, I guess that was, _____.

We started out to locate natural areas and

Tape 1 Side B

WELLNER: _____ during the State meetings with people and, and talked about natural areas and, and we were working during the '70's. We had a committee made up of University of Idaho people and some of southern Idaho. There were Chairmen, there were supposed to be subcommittees, but it turned out they did all the work so we, we just didn't have anyone else to work with us. The National Forest Management Act was passed in 1976. I thought I'd spend about ten years on research natural areas and then the Act came along and the National Forest pretty soon natural areas were just part of the National Forest scheme of things. And couldn't be approved until each forest plan was approved. And so, we were busy locating natural areas and most of them had to be located by 19, the early 1980's to get in the plans. So we were awfully busy. All over Idaho. And I just took Idaho, when I came back, before that I'd been a Chairman for the whole Intermountain Station, but I knew when I retired that I would have to stick with one state, so I picked Idaho. And it was pretty difficult. The forests were pretty, pretty helpful to

us on the location of natural areas and, of course, up until the law was passed about natural areas I found that even the forests weren't all that interested in natural areas. But then we managed to get into the law, the 1976 Act in a way that they sectioned in there on natural areas. The first draft of the stuff that went with the law, see the law just spelled it out in broad terms, and the Forest Service had to write up the details of it themselves. And when they wrote up the details, they left out natural areas completely. But by reviewing their drafts we managed to get the word into the law, or into the material that went with the law, that had to be approved by Congress, that natural areas would, was a part of the Forest Service system. Well, then they, then the National Forests starting coming to us to a, for help and because it was part of the law. And so we, or Idaho Research Natural Area coordinating committee set up and, and made up of people like Doug Henderson and, and University of Idaho people, and sometimes southern Idaho.

We located all the natural areas in Idaho. Then the Park, the Park Service, we located three on Park Service land, but it, BLM's is what I was trying to think of, BLM was interested in natural areas. We had located a lot of them on BLM land, some thirty. When it came to set them aside, he says, well, we don't have time for... and they didn't do anything about it until 1983, I think it was, that the, they were getting a lot of criticism because in their Act, which also passed in 1976, setting up the BLM as a pretty much a multiple use organization, they were getting a lot of criticism for not taking care of natural areas.

It was the only thing in the Act that really had criticism, that had emphasis. They, well, they, some of the states would set up one or two natural areas when all the criticism came, why, the fellow in Idaho took all of those that we had written up and set them aside just over night.

SIMMS: BLM ____.

WELLNER: BLM, yeah. The boundaries and everything else. It was just as we had given them. And the Forest Service, why you always had a lot of trouble that they were reviewed and, of course, with the BLM they were set up by the state, the state director, and the Forest Service, the Chief, had to approve each one. So it became very difficult. Anyway, we kept on and wrote them up as much as we could with the time the Acts were passed and then we pulled out all these and began to feed them through the system to get them passed by the Washington office.

Well, that's about the history of that stuff.

SIMMS: OK.

WELLNER: Now, I guess I'd better come back and talk about fish ____.

SIMMS: So you were married when you went to, when you to college or before that, or after that or?

WELLNER: I was married just before World War II.

SIMMS: So you had worked for the Forest Service before?

WELLNER: I worked for them, as I say, going clear back to 1931, is when I started. But I got an appointment in 1933 on one of these sort of, it was a regular appointment, but it was sort of a temporary thing.

SIMMS: Was it a full-time?

WELLNER: It was full-time.

SIMMS: OK. But they just didn't consider you a permanent employee.

WELLNER: That's right. Until the late 30's, I got a permanent one thing.

SIMMS: What did you do in the military?

WELLNER: I was an _____ engineer. Weather forecaster.

SIMMS: Oh, I see.

WELLNER: They called them aerological engineers in the Navy.

And I forecast weather for...

SIMMS: Aboard ship?

WELLNER: Aboard ship, yeah.

SIMMS: Were you in the Pacific _____?

WELLNER: I was, I was stationed down in the Caribbean for awhile and then I got assigned to a ship and I was on the USS _____. Well I didn't get off of there until the tail end of the war, but we were out there for quite awhile after that.

SIMMS: Did your previous experience with the experiment forest have anything to do with your being a weather...

WELLNER: Well, they looked in my record. They, they saw that I had been an engineer, so I was sent to Annapolis for...

SIMMS: Oh, I see...

WELLNER: ...to, to get weather training for, for a year during the war. I went back then. And then I went down in the Caribbean. I was down there for awhile. Before I came back I

was on the ship from...

SIMMS: Did experience help you out later on. the weather experience? After the war?

WELLNER: No, the Navy people, of course, wanted me to stay in the Navy as a weatherman. I wanted to get back to the job, so I could...

SIMMS: Well, maybe we can talk about Priest River, huh.

LAWRENCE: OK. One thing that kind of confuses me is how the research was...you mentioned that you worked at the Station during the summer, went back to Moscow, or to Missoula, in the winter. Was that, did most researchers do that, or...

WELLNER: No. Until they began to get these, until the late, late '70's, when they began to get funds for stations out like the Spokane Research Center, you see, set up a research center there, I was in charge of it, and that was happening all over.

LAWRENCE: Did a, like, in the earlier, in the 30's say, were, who would stay there year around? Let's put it that way.

WELLNER: We had, oh, Priest River Forest has quite a history of its own. You see, it was set up in 1911 and for, it was the, the research center, or not the research center, but the research center for the Northern Rocky Mountains until 1916, I think it was. But they transferred the headquarters to Missoula. And then it became just a sort of a substation, you see, or an experimental forest. The Director was changed from, from the Priest River Station to Missoula at that time. And so from then on they usually had a, somebody would be temporary out there, I shouldn't say temporary, they were permanent people, but a sub-

professional that took care of the station in the year around and the professionals would go out in the wintertime, or in the summertime, and carry out their research.

LAWRENCE: And, so, for example, Gisborn would have lived in Missoula rather than around.....

WELLNER: That's right. He always lived in Missoula.

LAWRENCE: He always did.

WELLNER: Yeah. Gisborn was, he would go out to Priest River in the summertime, do most of his research out there, and that continued until, oh, until he died. After the war he took on Jack Barrows, Barrows, he'd know Jack Barrows in Yellowstone and Jack was working for the Park Service down there, was on fire, and when Jack came back from the Army and, I guess that was in, that was right after World War II, Gisborn took him on.

_____ had high hopes for it. Well, Jack wasn't a researcher, he was a promoter. And he'd, Gisborn got quite discouraged with him because he just couldn't quite do what he wanted him to do. As far as Gisborn was concerned, he would have fired him, if he hadn't died. But Jack got set up in charge of fire research. And, promoted, got the fire _____. And that came along about 1971, I think the fire lab was set up. I always thought it was interesting that Gis was going to fire _____.
_____.

LAWRENCE: Well, sometimes you needed a researcher and sometimes you need a promoter, I guess.

WELLNER: It was an interesting period because, although he got the Washington office, he was, he tried to keep very direct

control of the fire lab and the director of the station was insistent that that was part of the station. They had a Hell of a time, winning it away from Jack Barrows.

LAWRENCE: So, I guess, the, could you summarize what a typical researcher would do during the summer? For example, would you go over there for a week and come back on the weekends, or, would you take your family there and stay all summer.

WELLNER: No, I'd go and stayed most of the summer.

LAWRENCE: Would you take your family with you?

WELLNER: I wasn't, well,

LAWRENCE: Or, would, say, Gisborn take his wife with him?

WELLNER: No, Gis, never had his wife up there. He'd come out in the summertime and go back in the wintertime. And...

LAWRENCE: So it was kind of a male type of deal there then.

WELLNER: I was trying to think of the name of the fellow that was in charge of the place. He was, they put a professional there in charge of the station until, until he left, until Gisborn left, why, he was still there. Thompson was his name. He wasn't a for...well, he was a forester, he was an Army, he'd been in the Army, came back and took forestry at the University of Montana and came out to Priest River as in charge of the station there year around. And then during the, during the 30's when they rebuilt the station, it was Tommy that really rebuilt that place. He....

LAWRENCE: He was the one that was on site all the time?

WELLNER: Yeah. They, they took down all the old buildings and built the lab, they built the various houses, the cookhouse was

the only, only building, that was the old stable, and they put a foundation under it and made a cookhouse out of it with a, with upstairs, was the bunkhouse.

LAWRENCE: Well, getting there, do you remember in the 30's how, how the road was getting up there?

WELLNER: It was a fair road. It was just a gravel road that _____ . I remember driving up with Lyle Watts one time. The road was alright, it was alright.

LAWRENCE: Getting around the station, did you use cars mostly or trucks. Did you use horses at all?

WELLNER: We, the station, you see, was, the reason that you see, there's a ranger station there.

LAWRENCE: Mmm.

WELLNER: The old entrance used to come up to the ranger station. When they started the station, 1911, they, they built straight on out and it was built in September of 1911. That's when they started the station. The weather station was started there; they moved it later.

LAWRENCE: So during the summertime, did they have regular mail service there all the time? In the 30's? By then they had...

WELLNER: They had mail service, yeah.

LAWRENCE: How about telephones, is there a line up there?

WELLNER: They had telephone, but they didn't have electricity until, mmm, it was about, I think, I think they got electricity during World War II. Gisborn, they, they put their own power line from Priest River, or near Priest River up to the station, belong to the Experiment Station for a long time and then they

finally, see none of that country up there had any power. I mean any line power. There was just power. And when they got, built the line on up to, up to Coolan, why then they took over the lines, the station line.

LAWRENCE: Let's see. Forgot what I was going to ask you on it.

WELLNER: I kind of skipped around....

LAWRENCE: That's fine.

SIMMS: Was that kind of at the end of the road? I mean, when did they take the road on, on further north?

WELLNER: It was already, it was already up to Coolan. The east side road was the main road to Priest Lake at the time. The west side road was very poor and it wasn't much of a road. I know when we'd go up to measure sample plots, we'd, on the west side of Priest Lake and on up, we'd several scouted over that whole country, and we'd, we'd go up there with, and stay for a week up the Forks of Granite, up in that area. Just because the roads were so poor.

SIMMS: Are those lots, those sites still being utilized, do you know, by some of the groups here, the ones up around the lake and so forth. Are those part, part of some of the permanent plots that they monitor, do you know?

WELLNER: A few of them they might. Most of them, there's a few of them they might, but I think most of them are gone now. Yeah.

SIMMS: I remember what I was going to ask you. Is, before electricity, the lighting, what did you use for lighting?

WELLNER: We had Coleman.

SIMMS: You did.

WELLNER: Coleman lanterns.

SIMMS: So the fixtures in those buildings are basically add-on.

WELLNER: Oh, yeah, they're all added on.

SIMMS: I see.

WELLNER: Yeah.

SIMMS: I didn't know...

WELLNER: ...in fact it's been, it was an overhead system, lines around the station and then they decided to, later to make underground...

SIMMS: Underground.

WELLNER: Well, they always had trouble with that so they finally went back to overhead.

SIMMS: OK.

WELLNER: That was back, still back in the 30's that they did that.

SIMMS: I know, just in Coeur d'Alene we have problems with doing any type of research even access to the local libraries, you know, how would you manage up there at Priest River where you didn't have a library _____.

WELLNER: Well, we, we had Missoula, the headquarters in Missoula. We relied on Missoula. And the University of Montana. We had our own library for a long time.

SIMMS: In Missoula?

WELLNER: The Forest Service had their own library over there. And that was finally given up to the University, but we, the station always had its own library. And....

LAWRENCE: There wasn't any library up, up at Priest, there was no on-site library or...

WELLNER: Oh, they had a little bit...

LAWRENCE: A little bit.

WELLNER: A little bit. Not very much. We, we usually relied on the Missoula. That, that was one reason for setting up research centers. So they'd be connected to the University. Good library facilities. That was done all over the country, you see, to set research up with universities.

SIMMS: Were there any local businesses that you patronized near the station, like stores, or gas stations?

WELLNER: Nothing, well, there's always a little, places in Priest River, I suppose, where we got our groceries and that sort of thing, but nothing that I remember _____ about.

SIMMS: That's basically where you did your local shopping is Priest River?

WELLNER: We did our local shopping at Priest River.

SIMMS: How about if anybody got sick or anything, was there a local doctor, that you know of?

WELLNER: This is tough.

SIMMS: That was just too bad.

WELLNER: You just had to get out of there, if you sick. I mean, if you, we never had a doctor then.

LAWRENCE: Were there any major accidents, where people had _____ problems, or life-threatening, the time you were there?

WELLNER: I don't, I don't think of any.

SIMMS: What do you think is the biggest contributions made by

this, by the, at the forest in research?

WELLNER: Well, there are a number of contributions. It's hard to say that, if you spoke to the fire people, they'd say the fire research. I was in timber management and I think that, that probably timber management was. But the station served a lot of purposes. Right now, genetics is a big, big feature there. I don't think that you can say that there's anything major that this is more important than that. During, shortly after World War II, when Gisborn was getting money for the Priest River, we started Deception Creek and had that place going full and most, most, we'd go to Priest River to measure plots and so on, but it was so occupied by the fire people that we'd go back to Deception Creek to, and so Deception Creek was timber management and Priest River was fire during World War II.

SIMMS: OK.

WELLNER: Or after World War II. Or even before that, in the '30's even.

SIMMS: Were there any big disappointments? As far as research or _____ operated?

WELLNER: As far as the Priest...

SIMMS: The Priest River Station...

WELLNER: I suppose so, but I ...

SIMMS: Nothing that stands out here...

WELLNER: No.

SIMMS: As far as like the headquarters, could you tell me, or tell us some of the activity you went on say, in the lab? What kind of typical activities would go on in the lab _____. Is

there some type of...

WELLNER: The lab was used mostly by fire research and then later by other disciplines that did their work in the laboratory. Most silviculture research was done out in the field. So we had plots all over the experimental forest, but I don't think we, oh, we used the lab some, but not as much as fire research did, as most of our work was done...

SIMMS: What about the greenhouses there? The old greenhouses. Did you use them much?

WELLNER: We didn't use them a Hell of a lot. Priest River started out with greenhouse work and then that was transferred to the Region and it was done elsewhere after about 19, let's see, 19, I don't know, anyway, they didn't do so much in silviculture at Priest River.

SIMMS: I notice in some of the old, older pictures, prior to '30, there was, you know, the greenhouses, then when they rebuilt they didn't put any in, so that must have been the reasons, because they moved that.

WELLNER: Yeah.

SIMMS: ...that work.

WELLNER: Yeah, they quit doing greenhouse work at Priest River.

SIMMS: Were any of the other buildings, for example, that, it's an open shed, to the east of the station, I think it was a wood, it's a wood storage or something like that, was on one of our maps. And, do you remember what, what you used that for?

WELLNER: I don't know what building you are referring to. You see, the office used to be down on the knoll.

SIMMS: Ok. Is this the one? _____.

WELLNER: That's the old office.

SIMMS: OK.

? : Shop, where the shop was.

WELLNER: This is the old shop, this was rebuilt. And the garage was rebuilt. The garage. And the, let's see,

SIMMS: Gas house.

WELLNER: And that was moved from the time where it used to be. It used to be right on the road and they built the road around through here, so they had to go over to....

SIMMS: Which was that?

? : This one here.

SIMMS: Oh, they moved that.

WELLNER: Yeah, they had to, because of the, they built the road around through here.

SIMMS: Oh. OK. What year was that that they moved it, do you remember? WELLNER: Oh, it was in the 30's.

LAWRENCE: Dated June 31st, it says.

SIMMS: Yeah, but the road is in a different place on this.

LAWRENCE: Right, we were wondering about that.

SIMMS: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: Thinking that we were looking at some roads, trying to figure...

WELLNER: See, this is February '32, and they didn't rebuild this until later in the 30's.

Tape 2 Side A

SIMMS: That map would be on the nomination _____.

Did you take those other photos back?

LAWRENCE: Yeah, they, the, someone was going back and so I thought, _____ maybe you can find right where you are looking at.

WELLNER: What I was going to mention was that the cookhouse...

SIMMS: This one right here. Or no, this,... There it is, OK.

WELLNER: This was the old stable.

SIMMS: That's the stable there.

WELLNER: Yeah. Looks like it...

SIMMS: That's this one here.

LAWRENCE: Let's see, wait a minute.

WELLNER: That's the old stable.

SIMMS: That's the old stable, right?

LAWRENCE: That's the one I was thinking was an open shed, here.

?:: That was clear back.

WELLNER: That was back and that's, that just stayed. _____

?:: OK. There it is.

WELLNER: That's the cookhouse.

SIMMS: There's the cookhouse.

WELLNER: Yeah. Yeah this was hoisted up, they built, I don't know if they put foundation under it originally or not, but they put, they blocked it up and made a, made a cookhouse out of it.

SIMMS: So that used to be a stable area, underneath?

WELLNER: Yeah, this was, the whole thing was a stable area at one time.

SIMMS: I'll be darned.

LAWRENCE: And was the, the top wasn't closed in at that time or did it have the upstairs area there?

WELLNER: I think the shape of the thing was about the same, but they, they redid the whole damn building.

LAWRENCE: So it, it wasn't the old shop that that was the stable?

WELLNER: No, no, no.

LAWRENCE: OK. Because they talk something about in one of their maps about horse shed or horse barn or something like, but, yeah.

SIMMS: So this is that?

WELLNER: _____.

LAWRENCE: Yeah.

WELLNER: There was this building, there was a...

SIMMS: And then they added on from here on, looks like at one time.

WELLNER: Well, they redid the whole building and changed the whole system of the station there.

LAWRENCE: OK, so this one, basically all three of these were changed in the 30's.

WELLNER: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: The shop and the gas house and the cookhouse.

WELLNER: You see, they had, pretty near had electric lights when this was....

SIMMS: (Too many folk talking at once.

+

SIMMS: Here's the old picture and, of course, it didn't have electric lights.

WELLNER: No. Well, you shot this yourself?

SIMMS: Yeah.

WELLNER: OK. This is a modern....

SIMMS: This year.

LAWRENCE: Now that telephone, remember that?

SIMMS: That's in the lodge?

LAWRENCE: In a little alcove there. It's got a crank on it.

WELLNER: Oh, this is in the lodge?

SIMMS: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: Yeah, right, and it has this crank telephone here.

WELLNER: Yeah, yeah. Something doesn't look right about this.
Let's see here.

SIMMS: Yeah, there's a wall here, you're missing here. This
is the...

LAWRENCE: ...going into the living room.

SIMMS: Yeah, right here.

LAWRENCE: The xerox didn't reproduce this...

SIMMS: This goes into the kitchen. You're standing at kind of
in front of the bathroom/bedroom area back here, and the stairs
going up and the stairs, or the hallway going out the back door.

WELLNER: Ok. You're in the lodge now. OK.

LAWRENCE: I was just wondering about this telephone, as...

WELLNER: Oh, it was, it was there for a long time and then when
they replaced the telephone system, they took it out.

LAWRENCE: Well, no it's still there.

WELLNER: Is it still there?

LAWRENCE: Oh, yeah, that's in, this is a recent photo.

SIMMS: Yeah.

WELLNER: Well, I'll be damned.

LAWRENCE: This is, they've preserved that in place. Apparently it still goes over to the, to the lab, is that right?

SIMMS: I think there used, there's a buzzer system there, too, for getting people, and I think that part of that system, and I think it still runs over there.

WELLNER: Well, this should be the fireplace, right over here.

LAWRENCE: Right. This is the edge of the writing, right here.

SIMMS: We've got a photo of that.

WELLNER: Well, they just kept this for...

LAWRENCE: Yeah, I was wondering about that photograph, above the... fireplace.

WELLNER: Why, Katy Swan took that. And it's of the Mission Mountains in Montana.

SIMMS: When was that, do you know when that was taken or what that was about?

WELLNER: Oh, it must have been taken about, back in the '20's or 30's.

SIMMS: 20's or 30's.

LAWRENCE: So that went in as the original park above the fireplace then?

WELLNER: Yeah, this fit in real early. Half the building was finished but that, that went in about that time. Just after the building was finished, which was about 1935, I guess, '36, somewhere along in that _____.

LAWRENCE: Why do you suppose they put that garage on the lodge?

I was just, was there someone, a permanent employee there? Or...

WELLNER: Well, see originally they, the lodge was built for the superintendent.

SIMMS: Oh.

WELLNER: So it would be his house.

LAWRENCE: OK. So that's why that thing is...

WELLNER: Yeah. This was... and then they discovered it was such a big building, they had better use it for something else. Or when, see my brain went dead two years ago... (Laughter, etc.) Part of my brain is just is gone...

LAWRENCE: Well, did Thompson, was that the one?

WELLNER: Yeah, Thompson, was the one...

SIMMS: Was he the one that was in their originally?

WELLNER: He lived here originally and everybody stayed over at the other building over there.

LAWRENCE: The bunkhouse.

WELLNER: The bunkhouse, mmm.

SIMMS: Oh, OK. Mmm.

WELLNER: Then when Thompson moved out, he got a job up at, went into the, to the sawmilling business, up at Bonners Ferry. And then they began to use this as a dormitory.

LAWRENCE: I was curious about the changing uses of, sometimes we design, I know on some of our other stations, on the forest, we've designed things for certain purposes.

WELLNER: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: And then it's changed and then we kind of sort of gerrymander things, you know. Was that a problem there, the

changing uses, we had a lot of use in the '30's when they were building these and then it tapered off and is that causing a problem?

WELLNER: Well, that's, of course, that, that happens just like genetics is a big, big user Priest River right now. As certain, certain phases of research, finish a certain job or do something and maybe they get phased out. And, and some of the experimental forest it has periods what's used heavily and periods when it isn't. At least that's been the history. Deception Creek, for example, was used in the '30's and in the 40's and later. But it got, after World War II, it got to, I know I, I ran the weather station at Deception Creek, started it and made sure it was going. Russ LeBaron came before I got back from the Navy and he just had one winter to, to run that, to weather station and he gave up on it. And when I got back, they'd discontinued the weather station. I was just terribly disappointed because there's no weather station back in that country.

SIMMS: Mmm.

LAWRENCE: Mmm.

WELLNER: In fact there's very few weather stations in the mountains and we need every damn station we have. And during the time we ran the station at Deception Creek, it was the wettest spot in Idaho, wettest recorded spot in Idaho.

LAWRENCE: Oh, yeah.

WELLNER: It still gets a Hell of a lot of precip though.

SIMMS: Was there a permanent person there, too, for awhile?

WELLNER: We'd, no we did have somebody there in the wintertime.

SIMMS: You would?

WELLNER: He had trouble getting, getting somebody to stay in there and I know when I come back from the Navy, _____ get back from the Navy.

LAWRENCE: '46.

WELLNER: '46, yeah. he'd, he had already discontinued the weather station. And the buildings were falling down because, I know I went out there right after I got back, and God, it was just a mess, they'd gotten somebody to take care of the station and there was woodchips and that little house, about so deep all over the floor. He'd gotten married before he went and I guess they just holed up in that one building and tried to take care of everything and let the buildings collapse and everything else.

LAWRENCE: The experimental forest, I, I was just impressed on how well it is kept up. It's almost a pride there that the place is just spotless.

WELLNER: You don't know the history. George Jemison was, he wasn't in charge of research yet, but was sent out to inspect. He was in the Washington office. Harper was in charge of research at the time. And Harper had reorganized the Forest Service. He was the one that, that had set up these projects with a few assistant directors to run everything. Anyway, what the Hell was I talking about???

SIMMS: The condition of Priest and it has a past history, where it wasn't probably kept up as well as it is now, or as it appears today.

LAWRENCE: Well, anyway, I was impressed...

WELLNER: _____, but I've forgotten it...

LAWRENCE: I was impressed with how well it is kept up by the people there. And in one place in your, in your _____..

WELLNER: _____. Jemison, in 196_____, must have been 1961 or '62 or '63, in that period, decided that they could do away with the Priest River. We disagreed with him and had a Hell of a time. This is the same time that we wanted to change the whole system of how research operated. Well, I think it was our '61 Washington office report that said we should cut back Priest River and do away with the Headquarters and get rid of all the buildings except the, the shop and the cookhouse.

SIMMS: That was in the early 60's.

WELLNER: That was early 60's. And, well, we just kept quiet and each year we had to report to Washington office, what we done about the inspection, you know. We just didn't say anything about Priest River. But during that time, why, we got money from the county up there, they were hard times, and there was money allocated to the, to the county for work, and so Priest River seemed like a good place to sink a lot of people. So they rebuilt the telephone system and a whole lot of things. And power system. And revamped the whole place.

Harper came out on the next inspection, so we were kind of afraid that he would, that was in 1965, I think it was, '65, '66. And so we took him to Priest River and showed him and explained what we had done, and he says, well, I think you did just fine. (Laughter) So, rather than giving us Hell, you know, from not moving the station and everything, we kept it.

Reid Bailey was, was Director and he wasn't sure we were playing things right, because he wasn't familiar with Priest River, with the Priest River Station, very familiar with it and we kept it though.

SIMMS: I didn't read it, one thing is that a biography of Gisborn where he's, a typical day, and one of his activities was to clean up, basically you had to clean up after yourselves. There wasn't anybody there that's, had the janitorial responsibility.

WELLNER: That's right.

SIMMS: You had to do it yourself.

WELLNER: Well, just, I know before I took over the station in, in '6_____, '68, he was trying to keep things going and, and more people were coming in, and, and at first we had a cook there for a good many years and then they quit the cook. And Gisborn was trying to take care of these people himself to some extent. People would come over to the lodge to stay, you know, and he'd have to cook meals, so he finally just gave up in disgust, I guess.

SIMMS: What was Gisborn like, working with him?

WELLNER: Gisborn was a, he was a hard person to work for. He only picked good people. If, if you weren't tops, why, he'd soon get rid of you. Of course, he didn't, didn't have very many people. But he hired people like _____ Chief. Mentioned before that he wanted to do away with the station. Names are just one of the damn things that I just can't keep track of.

LAWRENCE: Well, we know _____.

WELLNER: And it got to be pretty difficult.

SIMMS: How was he like out in the field, out on the field with him? You said you worked some summer or summer or sometime _____.

WELLNER: Oh, Gisborn. He was, if he liked you, why, he'd do anything for you. He would, like the people that worked for him, like Lloyd Hays and, and _____. Jemison, yeah. They were good people and he would do anything for them. He would feed them manuscripts, _____. He did a good share of the work and yet, they were the authors of it. Although they did good work. But he was, I've seen him just, he'd go in and say, if you'd go into his office and talk with him, you'd say, but kind of mumble around and say, God damnit, get to the point.

BOTH: Yeah.

LAWRENCE: Don't have time for this _____.

WELLNER: And he'd do that with a regional forester, anyone. Wasn't...

LAWRENCE: Wasn't bashful.

WELLNER: No. He was offered a job in the Washington office and he didn't take it. He says, I can do more out here than I could in Washington. He was a Hell of a good man. He, he was the first fire researcher in the world, full-time fire researcher. Pioneered most of the, well, like fire danger. The fire lab has done a lot of work since then, but...

SIMMS: He started it.

WELLNER: He started it, yeah. And, oh, he had it going before they got started. Well they've improved on it and, but... And

he worked _____ National Forest systems. This was the thing. You very closely all during his career, he worked to, he got them to put, oh, weather stations on lookouts. It was at the time the weather bureau was made up of not professionals at that time, you see, when the, when we got aviation in this county, they couldn't depend on the weather bureau, so they set up their own. And because there were new, new features of weather that had been pioneered in Europe. And this, the weather bureau was made up of just folks that had come up through the ranks and didn't know a damn thing about. They knew nothing about fronts or that sort of thing. And Gisborn was awfully disgusted with them so he tried to set up his own system of...and they put all these little, many, many lookouts, and we had lots of lookouts at that time, put weather stations on them and rain gauges. He says, well, we have the standard rain gauge, cost you at that time it was \$75.00, which was a lot of money. I suppose it cost \$200, \$300 or \$400 now. So he went out and made his own rain gauges. He says for our purpose, we can, have to have near a tin can and measure the precip that falls in it. And, anyway, precipitation is a hard thing to measure anyway. _____ over ten feet or twenty feet, different thing. Or if you get a wind and so on, so that all this accuracy we want to think we have, we don't actually have it.

Well, he set up stations on all lookouts. Well, of course, they did away with the lookouts. And they kept a few around. Of course, they did away with them, that came after he left.

LAWRENCE: Can you, any other researcher like that stand out,

somebody who's worked with the National Forest System, worked extensively on a certain area, seem to be fire or silviculture or....

WELLNER: Well, I think we had quite a few people that worked directly with...Wideman, for example, who was the first station director from about 1921 until Watts came on. They expanded the station and Wideman became in charge of silviculture. Wideman did a lot of good things, Priest River and around.

One of the things though about Priest River in our silvicultural work, only about, oh, I'd say 25% of our work was done on the forest. Most of it was done on the, up and down north Idaho.

LAWRENCE: On the National Forest System?

WELLNER: On the National Forest, yeah.

LAWRENCE: So you had, really had to be....

WELLNER: We had to, we had to work and we were working on methods of cutting and that sort of thing, so we had to go where the cutters were _____. You'd be interested, the Priest River Forest, that wasn't considered very good timber. The white pine up Benton Creek there was, they tried to make a big sale up there one time and no one would buy it. It was just considered poor timber.

SIMMS: When was that?

WELLNER: The white pine wasn't very good up there. That was in the days when you just about sold only white pine. Now we got some of the best white pine up there.

(Laughter)

LAWRENCE: Some of the other folks...

WELLNER: Well...

LAWRENCE: _____ Bob Marshall was there, but he wasn't there long.

WELLNER: Bob Marshall, he was, he did a little work there back in the '20's. But he got the Hell out of there. I mean, he went back and got his degree and from his degree went to the Indian Service and various organizations and finally come back to the Forest Service on the Washington office. But he, he was a Hell of a good man, but he was studying mostly _____ areas when he was at Priest River. He spent, I think, two summers, he talked to me, he liked Priest River, so he talked to the station to letting him stay up over the wintertime one time. And he liked the...

SIMMS: Who did he work for when he was there during the summer?

WELLNER: Wideman.

SIMMS: Wideman.

LAWRENCE: Any others? That stand out?

WELLNER: I don't know. We had, there's so many people at Priest River, that come and gone and, and they'd work there for awhile and then they'd go out. There's a lot of outstanding people worked there.

LAWRENCE: (Background) I was curious about the numbskull club. How...

WELLNER: How did it start?

LAWRENCE: Yeah. And just how did it get going on and on.

WELLNER: There was a field assistant, I'm trying to think of his name, I know it. He was a Jewish boy from the east. He came out, see that was 193_, must have been about 193_, '33 or somewhere along in there, '34 or '35, I guess it was. Anyway, he was working at Priest River and he'd gone up _____ Creek in a car and got up there where the dam is now and couldn't turn the car around. It just went across the road. So on his way back, why, he found an old skull and came back and says, I'm a numbskull. And folks had to go back and get the car. Well, that started the numbskull club, he thought that was good. So we would, we got Lyle Watts one time and he was at Priest River and he was going to take somebody back to Missoula and he went on back to Missoula and completely forgot about that he'd promised them, and they were waiting... (Laughter). So he got elected to the numbskull.

And then when Ken Davis, Ken Davis started Deception Creek, you know, and built it up, it was after World War II, and we would get these lists from the Army of all the things you get for nothing, you know, you just pay, pay the shipping on it. And so Ken was going, going down through the list and saw this paper-cutter, so he thought, boy, we need a papercutter, so he ordered that. Well, first thing we knew, why, they got in touch with the station and said they had shipped the papercutter. It occupied a flat car all by itself. And it would be arriving in Spokane, I guess, a certain time. No, Missoula a certain time. Well, they, they got it, sent it onto Spokane, this great big papercutter. It was a Hell of a big thing. Well, that's when he got elected

to the numbskull club.

LAWRENCE: Remember how Gisborn got on there?

WELLNER: Oh, let's see.

LAWRENCE: I think he's on there a couple of times.

WELLNER: I've forgotten.

LAWRENCE: Do you remember any of the other people on there?

WELLNER: Almost everybody did something sometime or other.

(Laughter) Most people could get on that. But it was, it was a good thing and then we had a change in directors and one of our directors in Ogden decided this wasn't quite up to snuff for...

SIMMS: A professional organization.

WELLNER: ...professional organization. Wanted to keep quite about it. We thought that was a Hell of a thing.

SIMMS: _____ . (laughter)

WELLNER: No, he just put the lid on it for awhile. What's it doing now, anything?

LAWRENCE: It's yeah, every once in awhile, somebody gets on it. We got the old skull weights, I guess, is up at Priest still, but we got another skull that's being stored here.

SIMMS: Oh, I didn't know that.

LAWRENCE: _____ . On our Forest, they would probably, we'd fill them up real fast.

WELLNER: Well, there's, a person does a lot of stupid things over their lifetime.

LAWRENCE: And you get caught a lot of times.

WELLNER: Yeah, there's always somebody watching.

SIMMS: That's right.

WELLNER: Well, do you think of other things. I don't....

LAWRENCE: Oh, let's see, my little list here.

WELLNER: Some of these things, I haven't been very good on. My mind just doesn't work as well anymore. I remember some things, some things are just completely gone.

LAWRENCE: On one of our maps it has, as a matter of fact the write-up from Larson, that's what it is.

WELLNER: _____ Larson, yeah.

LAWRENCE: Yeah, he, he shows a chicken coop, I guess in the _____ that had been a trapper cabin in the, in the meadow there. And I was wondering if there were any stories relating to the previous use of that headquarters area by homesteaders or trappers or...

WELLNER: No, no one used that. I think that the ranger station out there, there was nothing, nothing beyond that in the early days. The so-called trappers cabin, I don't think it was a trappers cabin. It was just a cabin that was built down there for some damn reason.

LAWRENCE: Ok.

WELLNER: Probably somebody labeled it trappers cabin, but I don't think it was.

SIMMS: In one of the pictures we saw somebody standing by that, didn't we, _____ the one you're talking about.

LAWRENCE: Yeah, mmm.

SIMMS: Yeah.

WELLNER: I know there was a cabin down there for a long time. But, it really didn't have any...

LAWRENCE: Have you ever heard of any Indian use of the area?

WELLNER: No. That's a curious thing.

LAWRENCE: _____ never like come up and pick berries or anything like that?

WELLNER: The only thing that was up there was, was an old prospect hole up on Center Ridge there. That was about the only thing.

LAWRENCE: OK. Pre-dated.

WELLNER: Predated _____.

LAWRENCE: How about neighbors in the area. I _____ where I read this, but, I think it was the day, talking about the one day in with Gisborn at the Priest River, he went out to shoo off some cattle from the station. Did you have any problems with neighbors as far as the cattle or with theft or anything like that?

WELLNER: Until we got it fenced, why, there was quite a little bit of _____. Especially from the south, come up, north side was so heavily timbered that nothing bothered there much. Those ranchers, but, it was never fenced on the north side. But the south side, those ranchers just turned their cattle loose and let them wander out. _____.

LAWRENCE: And did they bother your experiments or your plots or your...

WELLNER: Well, they never really got into the forest very much, so...

LAWRENCE: You kept a pretty good eye on them.

WELLNER: As I remember the area down there where Gisborn put his

weather stations, where he put his full _____, I think the station fenced that area early so that, the knoll area there was cut, and that whole country was cut, just before the station was _____. They kept the knoll as a seed source, they had another one down on the flat that when they started a fire to burn it, they lost, lost that seed source up on the flat, that's before the station was started. And then they had one across the river, it was a whole, it was a big cutting, but clear across the river. _____ across the river was OK, but the, it burned out one of them.

Well, that, that's why Gisborn went down there, because it was open, you see, at that time, been cut, _____ clear cut, it's half cut, _____ timber.

First, first fire danger station _____.

SIMMS: Did you guys ever, as far as wildlife, any, any unusual wildlife, hear stories early on, like grizzly or anything of that, I mean any, any kind of incident with wildlife?

WELLNER: Well, there was interesting wildlife. But I don't think there's anything particular about it. Except down on the river was a great big white pine with one of these great big birds with long necks...

SIMMS: Oh, a vulture?

WELLNER: What?

SIMMS: Vulture.

WELLNER: No.

SIMMS: Herons.

WELLNER: Herons. _____ heron. There was a heron _____ down

there in one of those big white pines. I counted, oh, just dozens of birds. The tree was, it was a great, big white pine, it was just covered with the droppings of them, nests all over. And it was on the experimental forest, and I thought, boy this, this is great, because it is the only little section where the old growth over along Priest River hadn't been cut. I went up there, it must have been '60's sometime, and went down to the river to, it must have been about 1966 or '67, somewhere in there, to, just to look at it. By gosh, it was cut. There was a section in there that had been cut. Got a map of the forest. Anyway the, the state claimed that that was theirs. And they had gone in and cut it, and _____ in charge, I never heard about it.

See, this little...

LAWRENCE: Oh, on... on yeah...

SIMMS: Just along the river, the took....

WELLNER: By gosh, they got the boundary drawn... I...

LAWRENCE: So they took that all off..

WELLNER: I'd argue that that's wrong. Because they had no right to this.

LAWRENCE: Mmm. Have they, they, on that other _____, we took it...

WELLNER: See, from 1911 to 1940, 40(?), the east side of Priest, Priest Lake was being for the unsurveyed state lands, they were trying to block up the state lands, I mean these sections

_____, so the unsurveyed lands, they placed those, they blocked up east of Priest, Priest Lake. Why the right hand

didn't know what the left hand was doing because they felt this experimental forest and along _____ must have been in the late '20's, I guess, it finally caught up that here, here they'd given away a lot of the experimental forest to the state. Well, the state says, we'll, we'll just take other land. But then began to look at the state more, there's no way that they could exchange land. And so it took an act of Congress to....

SIMMS: I remember reading something about that.

WELLNER: ...to restore this original boundary. And this, this part wasn't supposed to have been included because that was, there was no argument about that. Here's a corner of a section up here that, that was mentioned, our boundary should go right along like that and somehow it never got cleared. And Wideman didn't want to make a fuss about it, so we didn't. And so we built roads through it.

LAWRENCE: I see that.

WELLNER: And everything, because we thought it was ours. It really was ours. But it didn't get cleared away.

_____ set aside the natural area up here. There was some land up in here that was one of these old homestead claims or something, you know, they'd claim some land and we got that cleared out of there.

LAWRENCE: Did they actually build anything there or, a homestead, nothing...

WELLNER: No, nothing. They wanted the timber at that time.

LAWRENCE: Yeah.

WELLNER: The, I set aside this natural area, this is one that

cut when the Regional Forester wouldn't set aside this early. And so it was caught up in the national system. We got it in there, but it wasn't approved in Washington. So I had to rewrite this establishment _____ one for Deception Creek and one for the experimental forest near Glacier Park. _____.

SIMMS: Tenderfoot, is that the one?

WELLNER: _____.

I'd located all these experimental, all these natural ones. Those the only three out of about twelve or fourteen that because they were on experimental forests and we had control of them, why, they were saved. The rest of them the regional forester wouldn't set them aside and went ahead and logged them.

? Well, _____ of questions here.

LAWRENCE: OK. Let's see.

WELLNER: Get Ray...talk with Ray...get him to talk about anecdotes and that sort of thing. He usually has some. I'm no good at that.

SIMMS: Yeah, we're planning for him later.

LAWRENCE: Well, that pretty well covers it except for I'm just kind of curious that you have been involved in the ecosystem, in research stations, research in general on the Forest Service _____ involved in the ecosystem, they maybe didn't call it that.

WELLNER: Oh, Hell, we...

LAWRENCE: ... but today we are, or National Forest system is embracing it, and surely we've... learned something.

WELLNER: It's an old, old concept. And we, in research in 19____,

when I went to Ogden, the director, I guess through my experience _____, he decided that I would be a good one to, to write up what they had already arrived at that, that our various locations should be based on habit, not habitat types, but ecosystems, rather than, functionally as _____.

And so I worked up an organization and Jemison came out and he just, because they were in trouble in the east with these, with these big research organizations and that was his reason for not embracing it. But we never have gone back to what we felt was the right approach. And I tried and tried. I was always for getting research together, you know. I think we've lost a lot because so many research projects have gone their own direction without considering all the angles. And...

LAWRENCE: You think that has changed or...

WELLNER: Well, they have tried to change it. Pacific Northwest station but I understand they are in trouble. I think we could have done it if we had started at that time.

SIMMS: Do you think that is the end of the training of the scientists over the, over the years, it's just very hard for them to focus beyond their, their areas, or...

WELLNER: Well, yeah. Or they come out of schools where a scientist is a scientist is a scientist. And, but I thought we could have done it. We'd have taken a lot of leadership from the central office to do it. But I think we could have done it.

LAWRENCE: Time.....change things. Now, if....

WELLNER: Well, it would have been a Hell of a lot better.

SIMMS: Yeah. We, we, our research in some ways we, we have

real depth in certain fields of research, but so what. It would have been better if we'd been able to tamper that with the other disciplines to, to say what does it mean and so on.

LAWRENCE: The Panhandle, for example, is reorganizing. For example, they've put everything on soils and hydrology and silviculture and wildlife and fisheries into ecosystems management. That's what they call that. So maybe we have learned something, I, but it's too bad we didn't learn it in the '60's.

WELLNER: Of course, you were supposed to do this several years ago, weren't you?

LAWRENCE: Yeah, right. What do you think about having achieved out of research. _____ give a different perspective.

WELLNER: We've had several of our chiefs that have been in research and gone over to, I don't know of any that was in research when he went, became chief, we've had several chiefs, like Lyle Watts, you see, was in administration, he came into research, did a wonderful job in research and went back to administration and did a good job. Been several like that.

SIMMS: Being plucked from, from down in the organization or bringing a researcher up, how do you think.....

WELLNER: I'm not sure that it's going to work out too well. I'm also, he's, of course, he's had a lot of forestry training since then, but he's a wildlifer. That's his training. I'm not, he may have had enough training since then. Of course, we've had chiefs that weren't foresters.

LAWRENCE: Been engineers.

WELLNER: But I think there's always a loss there. There's a tendency to discredit right now the training of a forester, but by God, you spend four years or six years or longer, there is something there to it. I see it every day and I wonder whether you are actually doing as good a job in the field by, by enlarging the forests like you are. My son tells me about the new chief asked for comments. It didn't get down to the ranger who knows more about the damn business of running a forest than oft-times the supervisor or the regional forester. They've made forests too damn big. How can a forest supervisor really embrace the whole forest and know what's going on, or his staff?

LAWRENCE: Well, they are making ranger districts bigger now.

WELLNER: Well, look at the one you've got up north here.

LAWRENCE: Yeah, _____ St. Mary's.

WELLNER: That's impossible.

LAWRENCE: Well, it's basically the Joe without the Palouse.

SIMMS: And that's not being quite _____, too, I mean, that's the trend.

WELLNER: The station is just as bad, you see, here we are going, oh, just one station from Mexico to Canada in the central. It's impossible. Both assistant director can never know what a place like this is doing. You can never have a forest like this here. Just like this, this fire publication that came out recently, or it hasn't come out, it's just the manuscript, but when I reviewed it, it was, it was talking about forest management in north Idaho and this had all kinds of errors in it. And I objected to it and if they want to talk fire, then they should talk fire, but don't,

don't try to embrace all, I don't know what they are going to do, but I said what you should do is to get some silviculturists over here on the group that is going to write this thing, rather than having, it was a thing so thick. Well, they're rewriting it, but rather than putting one of the folks here, the silviculturists who know more about the forest than anyone else, they're going to rewrite it over there and I guess the assistant director is going to review it and see whether it is ok or not. The trouble is, the assistant directors don't know too much about the forests over here. And the forest, north Idaho forests are different from the rest, the most productive and the weather is different and it is entirely different from the rest of the station.

If they were treating it, they gave lodgepole pine probably a greater, greater coverage in this damn manuscript than any other species, just page after page about it. And they had gone clear over to Yellowstone to talk about lodgepole. And Hell, their lodgepole isn't our lodgepole. And lodgepole isn't that important in north Idaho as it is in the eastern. Well that's the sort of thing, I don't know whether they've, the system their setting up for research takes care of things like this. I don't see how the assistant directors of, of the, (is this thing still on?)

SIMMS: Yeah.

WELLNER: Well, I was just talking.

LAWRENCE: I was going to say I would say something if it weren't. Well, basically I just wanted to give you a chance to, your experiences in research and looking at what the national forest

system is doing now, where would you think that we could make some improvements?

WELLNER: I think national forest service isn't doing enough talking and saying that there is something to forestry besides what, what all the folks outside are saying.

LAWRENCE: The appellants, or...

WELLNER: Yeah. Like when the chief said, we won't use clear-cutting anymore unless we have to. That's a mistake.

SIMMS: That's a political statement more than anything else.

WELLNER: Yeah. And foresters should just object. We've made a lot of mistakes in our forestry practices, but we know a Hell of a lot about forestry. If unless you use an even-age system, don't practice what the Spokane _____ is starting to do, but you might as well forget about white pine and larch and Douglas fir and the white pine type and all these species that don't grow there. You just grow hemlock and cedar, some _____ fir. They are making statements, they don't know what the Hell they are talking about. They don't have the knowledge. I'm disappointed the Forest Service for not...

LAWRENCE: ...standing up.

WELLNER: ...standing up. They are just quiet.

LAWRENCE: I was just reading, an editorial in the Chicago, this is in the Spokane paper, but it was an editorial from the Chicago paper, and they were carrying his editorial and it was commenting on Spokesman's series on the Forest Service.

SIMMS: The three part series.

LAWRENCE: Yeah...

WELLNER: That three or four part series.

LAWRENCE: Yeah, and he was, he was basically taking that as gospel. It was in the Spokesman, and saying basically we are criminals, basically, we've mismanaged the forests and...

WELLNER: Well, you know...

LAWRENCE: ...quota and...has been pushed around by the politicians.

WELLNER: What's his name that started the Forest Service?

SIMMS: Gifford.

WELLNER: Gifford Pinchot. He didn't believe in old growth. He didn't, he believed in cutting and getting productive forests. He believed in clear-cutting, it would get the most value. I know he didn't have the knowledge we have now of, of water, although, Hell, in his time they were, they were taking over some of the eastern forests, _____ the eastern forests because of watershed, but they didn't have the details of the water that, to know, to protect the water as we do now. Of course, water has become a Hell of a lot more important to us now, too. But the course that Pinchot set for the Forest Service they followed. Getting rid of the old-growth. Getting productive forests, high yielding forests and so, and, that's been the history of the Forest Service. And, by God, we know how to do it, too. There's a lot more to forestry than that, but the other things that go with it are important.

Well, I, it disappoints me that there isn't somebody in forestry that's, that's doing more talking. And saying, listen you jokers, you don't know what you are doing. Because we just

sort of sitting down and waiting. The club's going to fall and I think we are going to take a beating.

LAWRENCE: My _____ opinion is that sooner or later the Republicans are going to get back in and they will probably make _____ a chief.

WELLNER: They'll do it.

LAWRENCE: Yeah.

WELLNER: Well, I, I think that was a terrible mistake. We are the only bureau left and now we are not left anymore. And I don't think it will ever go back.

LAWRENCE: Neither do I. So...

WELLNER: It's going to be political and you can't handle a forest on a political basis, changing, that's what the Forest Service and Pinchot recognized. But you know, Pinchot was, of course, they took most, a good share of the national parks from the national forests, and that was alright. Because they were unique. But he fought all of that and thought that, they got in some real controversy with some, some of the park people in what they were doing.

Well, it bothers me that these people, like the Spokane crowd, think that Pinchot was just _____, well, he should be revered. But he's the one that set the whole course for the Forest Service.

Your Coeur d'Alene forest up there. They're talking about, you've overcut, you're getting a lot of erosion, Hell, I don't believe it. You're getting erosion alright, but we always had erosion. I've seen that, that river so, way along time ago,

before there was much cutting on the forest, with high water that, that you couldn't get to the highway anymore. Going to Wallace and Kellogg.

SIMMS: _____ in that area.

WELLNER: Yeah. It flooded. It's going to flood again. It isn't because of cutting either. I was going to say it happened after the 1910 fire, you had the little northeast side of it clearcut, but that wasn't enough to do what happened then. You get the right rain conditions or you get snowfall...

SIMMS: 1933.

WELLNER: ...and then rain in the spring, and everything comes off. And that's what happens, and will happen again.

You folks really feel you're getting erosion from all those cuttings back there.

LAWRENCE: Nothing like what they are saying in the paper, that's for sure.

WELLNER: But are you getting it, that's what I am asking.

LAWRENCE: Not that I know of.

WELLNER: I don't either, know either.

LAWRENCE: I'm not a hydrologist (laughter).

WELLNER: What?

LAWRENCE: I'm not a hydrologist.

SIMMS: _____, that's always surprised me, I find it, read about all the erosion on the forests and everything else, but yet you go right outside of town here and look at the fields and the plowing, all the agricultural.....it's nothing compared to what's going on with

the wind...

WELLNER: Of course, everyone recognizes agriculture and forestry are two different things. And you get all kinds of erosion out there compared with we don't have our soil either, they have lots of soil, but it's not good soil.

SIMMS: But I mean if you are talking sedimentation overall, you're dealing with 5% of the problem, it's putting 90% of the money into that or whatever, it should be the other way around.

WELLNER: Well, I probably haven't done very well of what you want.

LAWRENCE: Oh, no, you were right on as a matter of fact, that's exactly what I wanted.

WELLNER: Because my mind isn't worth much anymore.

LAWRENCE: Well, you did an excellent job. You're a very good interviewer and it's probably one of the best interviews I've ever had actually.

WELLNER: Well, the Priest River Forest is a good place.

SIMMS: Yeah, it's a jewel.

WELLNER: We lost one, Deception Creek, and that, that, too, is and we should have had another one down here in the Clearwater, because neither of those forests have, oh, they have a little bit of excellent site....

End of tape.